

RECOGNIZING JESUS IS ALIVE AND AMONG US

Focus Scripture: John 20:19–31

Youth issue:

Doubts and
Fears

Purpose: To experience sadness and fear turning to joy as the disciples realize that Jesus is alive and among them

Preparation

Pictures and materials for story and activity are at the end of the lesson

Lighting of the Christ Candle

We light the Christ candle to remind us that God is always with us.

Easter Greeting

Last week was Easter, and we celebrated that Jesus is alive in a new way. That is worthy of a celebration that lasts longer than just one week! In fact, the Easter season lasts for six weeks. That's six weeks of celebration.

Each Sunday during the Easter season, we will say an Easter greeting. One person says, "Christ is risen," and the other replies, "Christ is risen, indeed." Let's try that.

Parent: *Christ is risen!*

All: Christ is risen, indeed.

Opening Prayer

Creator God, help us celebrate the new life in your creation:

the sun that warms the earth,

the seedlings that are beginning to unfold,

the birds and animals that are with us once again.

Thank you for the new life of Spring,

and for the new life of Easter. (nod)

All: Alleluia! Amen.

Introducing the Theme – Resurrection Quiz

In advance: Make copies of the Resurrection Activity Sheet. Bring pens/pencils.

Before we start today's lesson, let us review the details of the Easter story.

Give the students time to answer the questions, then discuss their answers as a group.

Exploring the Theme – “Are We All Afraid of the Same Things?” Activity

In advance: Make copies of the activity sheet, one for each student. Bring pens/pencils.

In our review of the Easter story, we thought about the feelings that the disciples had after Jesus’ death and when they saw Jesus when they first experienced the resurrection. One of those feelings was fear. Let’s think some more about fear. What are you afraid of? This sheet will help you to think about that.

Hand out the sheets. Read through the instructions together and answer any questions. Give the students time to think about and complete the sheet, then discuss their answers, focusing on their responses in the rational/irrational columns.

We’re going to continue reading from John’s Gospel now. (Read John 20:19-31).

When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” After he said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples rejoiced when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained.”

Jesus and Thomas

But Thomas (who was called the Twin), one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord.” But he said to them, “Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands, and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were shut, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you.” Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here and see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” Thomas answered him, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus said to him, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.”

What were some of the feelings that the disciples experienced in this story? (List their answers on chart paper.)

Mary told the other disciples what she saw, but they didn’t understand. They were still confused and sad. Then, late Sunday evening, Jesus was suddenly there with them and told them they were to carry on his work. They were amazed.

But a week later, they were still meeting behind locked doors. They still were not ready to reach out and tell others. What do you think they were afraid of? Were these fears physical or social? Were they rational or irrational?

And what about Thomas? What was the primary emotion that he felt? (doubt) Yes, so much so that he is often referred to as “Doubting Thomas.” Can you relate to how Thomas felt? It is common for Christians to experience doubts from time to time. How can you respond if that happens to you? (read scriptures, attend Bible study groups, talk with other church members/the minister, pray)

Jesus appeared to the disciples over a 40-day period. It took that long for them to fully recognize that Jesus was with them in a new way and wanted them to reach out and tell the story to others. Then Jesus left to be with God. Soon after, when they were all gathered together at the harvest festival of Pentecost, the disciples were finally able to get past their doubts and their fears. They experienced a new power, a resurrection within themselves. Filled with joy and courage, they began to preach openly to others about Jesus. That is why Easter is not one day but a season of 50 days. 50 days of praise. Alleluia!

Integrating the Theme – “Resurrection” Images

Bring paper (art paper or regular white paper), pencil crayons, coloured markers, pastels or charcoal. If you did not use the Resurrection Quiz sheet earlier in the lesson, bring a copy of that sheet. If you used the Quiz sheet earlier in the lesson: *At the beginning of today’s class, our sheet had a picture that represented resurrection. I invite you to think of an image that represents resurrection for you and draw it now.*

If you did not use the Quiz sheet earlier in the lesson: **(Hold up the sheet.)** *Look at the picture on this sheet. In what way does it show resurrection? I invite you to think of an image that represents resurrection for you and draw it now.*

Closing Prayer

**0 God, like the disciples long ago,
we struggle to understand the mystery of Christ’s resurrection.
Help us to embrace our questions like Thomas did.
Support us as we seek to understand how Christ is present and among us today,
empowering us to go out and continue his acts of love and compassion.
Amen.**



Resurrection

QUIZ

1. How did the disciples discover that Jesus' body had disappeared?

2. When they heard this, how did the disciples feel? Happy? Sad? Afraid? Confused? All of these? None of these?

3. Why was it dangerous to be known as a follower of Jesus?

4. What season of the Church year are we in now?

5. How long is it? Why is it this long?

6. Look at the picture shown at the left. Do you think it does a good job of illustrating its title? Does it show resurrection? Why, or why not?
